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Ky. maintenance group receives top NGB honor

By Capt. Dale Greer
Wing Public Affairs Officer

The Kentucky Air National Guard's 123rd Maintenance Group was recognized for exceptional performance last month when it was named the 2003 Air National Guard Outstanding Medium Aircraft Maintenance Unit of the Year.

The group also was selected as the National Guard Bureau's



Senior Airman Philip Speck/KyANG

Senior Airman Lee Stanley and Tech. Sgt. Carl Shaffer, both members of the 123rd Maintenance Group, replace a nutplate on a C-130 Hercules here. The group just won a top NGB honor.

nominee for the 2003 Air Force Maintenance Effectiveness Award for medium-sized aircraft.

The unit, commanded by Col. Howard Hunt, distinguished itself by providing superior aircraft maintenance at home and abroad from Oct. 1, 2002 through Sept. 30, 2003.

During this period, the 123rd Maintenance Group was federally activated in support of Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom, just months after completing a yearlong mobilization in support of Operation Noble Eagle.

In bestowing the award during a ceremony held on base May 15, the National Guard Bureau's Col. Elliot Worcester called the 123rd "one of this nation's best Air National Guard Units."

"The presentations this morning reflect the services and the sacrifices that you have all made in order to protect our freedom and to bring that freedom to others around the world," he told the crowd of about 500 unit members who gathered for the ceremony in the Fuel Cell Hangar.

"The efforts put forth by the members of the maintenance group in support of this wing's operational mission are noteworthy. From ensuring full mission accomplishment in operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom to supporting the community with programs like the Combined Federal Campaign and Special Olympics, you've proven yourselves to be warriors and patriots."

"Col. Hunt provided command leadership and an expeditionary maintenance group, and the maintainers of the 123rd Maintenance Group performed the highest quality of maintenance in deployed locations and at home. You have proven that you have a winning attitude, and I congratulate all of you for winning this outstanding aircraft maintenance unit award," said Colonel Worcester, who is director of logisitics for the Air National Guard.

During the award period, the 123rd Maintenance Group deployed 51 personnel and associated equipment to Ramstein Air Base, Germany, in support of four C-130s. It also deployed 113 troops and equipment to the Central Command Area of Responsibility in support of six C-130s. Meanwhile, the group's remaining personnel supported Air Mobility Command missions from Louisville.

The combined operations resulted in the generation of 3,196 sorties and 7,821 hours of flight, according to the award citation.

Col. Mark Kraus, commander of the 123rd Airlift Wing, also congratulated the members of the 123rd Maintenance Group, and he expressed his appreciation for the hard work of everyone in the wing.

The colonel, who recently returned from a five-month deployment to Kuwait, told the audience that his experience there commanding the 386th Air Expeditionary Wing have only reinforced his belief that "nobody does airlift any better than the 123rd."

"I've always been proud to be a part of this wing," he continued, "but the things we've done over the past couple of years and the way we stack up against other units makes me even more proud."

MDS completes inspection

Cargo Courier Staff Report

The 123rd Medical Squadron successfully completed a Health Services Inspection here April 25.

The inspection, conducted by the Air Force Inspector General from Kirkland Air Force Base, N.M., covered such areas as medical readiness, training, medical operations and leadership.

The squadron's airmen worked exceptionally hard to complete the inspection, said Lt. Col. Diana Shoop, chief of health care support services.

"They are extremely dedicated to the mission and ready for any challenge," Colonel Shoop said. "The responsibilities of a unit our size are incredible."

An HSI inspection, which is conducted at Air Guard bases every four to five years, is no small chore.

"Passing one of the toughest Headquarters Air Force inspections is definitely something to be proud of," the colonel said.

The inspectors identified two exceptional areas on base, the Drug Demand and Reduction Program, and the Food Safety Program.

The inspectors noted that they were "two of the best inspected" programs they'd ever seen, she said.

Airmen's access to pay information gets easier

ARLINGTON, Va. — Defense Finance and Accounting Service officials announced May 12 that Airmen can receive personal identification numbers for myPay through their official Air Force e-mail accounts.

Airmen can expect to receive a new or updated PIN within two hours of requesting it on the myPay Web site.

The e-mail PIN delivery process is a simpler, faster alternative to the direct mail and in-person request methods previously available, DFAS officials said.

This capability is especially timely as more people are

realizing the benefits of accessing myPay from remote and deployed sites.

Customers can view, print and save leave and earnings statements, make adjustments to federal and state tax withholdings, update bank account and electronic transfers and change address information, all on-line at <https://mypay.dfas.mil>.

The Web site is available to all servicemembers, military retirees and annuitants, and Departments of Defense and Energy civilian employees.

New fitness standards for ANG troops released

By Capt. Kristin Knuteson
Wing Fitness Program Manager

The Air National Guard announced details of a new fitness program in April, making only minor changes to the previous fitness test that was unveiled last year.

Among the changes:

—Test results will be calculated using a point-based system.

—The abdominal circumference location for female measurements has been revised.

—Females will perform full-body push-ups.

—The push-up test will be a one-minute, timed test.

—A 1 1/2-mile run may be performed instead of the step test as long as members meet certain criteria.

The components to be evaluated for a unit member's score are aerobic fitness (50 points), abdominal circumference (30 points), push-ups (10 points) and crunches (10 points).

Total points earned will be divided by the possible points to provide a final score.

Composite scores give fitness levels as follows:

90 or higher = Excellent

75 - 89.99 = Good

70 - 74.99 = Marginal

69.99 or lower = Poor

Those who rate "excellent" or "good" will test once per calendar year.

Members who are "marginal" will retest in six months.

Those who rate "poor" will be enrolled in the Fitness Improvement Program and



Senior Airman Phillip Speck/KyANG

Capt. Kristin Knuteson, the wing's fitness program manager, briefs unit fitness program managers on the newly released physical fitness standards. The new evaluation process will provide unit members with a numerical score based on their performance in aerobic fitness tests, muscular assessment tests and body composition measurements.

will retest no later than six months after their previous test.

The 1 1/2-mile run or the three-minute step test will evaluate aerobic fitness.

Body composition will be determined by waist circumference, and a muscular assessment will be evaluated by the one-minute timed push-up test and the one-minute timed crunch test. Flexibility will be assessed with the sit- and-reach test, but it is not part of

the composite score.

A fitness age will still be provided for the member's knowledge; however, the Air National Guard score will determine whether a member meets the required standard.

Testing for unit fitness program managers and fitness assessment monitors will begin this month.

For more information, contact your unit fitness program manager.

Unit members can vote prior to deploying

Members of the Kentucky Air Guard who expect to be deployed in November can easily register to vote and cast an absentee ballot through the U.S. Mail with the help of a federal Web site.

Those who are not registered to vote can complete a Federal Post Card Application and mail it to the state in which they vote.

The cards, which also can be used to request an absentee voting ballot, are available online at the Federal Voting Assistance Program Web site — <http://www.fvap.gov>.

The deadline for voter registration applications is Aug. 15.

Absentee voting ballots are due in their respective states no later than Oct. 11.

Honor guard performs with strength, dignity

Team seeks new members

By Senior Airman Wendy Haight
123rd Airlift Wing Honor Guard Member

Grieving family members huddle close as members of the 123rd Airlift Wing Honor Guard pay respect to fallen soldiers and airmen who have given the ultimate sacrifice to pave the path of freedom Americans enjoy every day.

Despite the anguish and despair of the moment — underscored by the graves surrounding us — there is strength and dignity — symbols of the honored profession of arms for which these soldiers and airmen sacrificed their lives.

Amidst the tears and poignant words of farewell, an honor guard team executes ceremonial movements with pride and precision, from the presentation of the American flag to the teary-eyed widow to the 21-gun salute, fired in perfect succession so that it sounds like three shots instead of 21.

As gunfire echoes across rolling hills of Kentucky, feelings shift from the sorrow and grief of loss to the pride and dignity of a fallen airman's accomplishments. More importantly, it becomes apparent to all in attendance that the service stands side-by-side with its people and their families till the end.

This time-honored ceremony remains the core function of the Honor Guard, a 20-person team assigned to the 123rd Airlift Wing here. While other local events capture the imagination of many Honor Guard members, including the dedication of the Veterans' Memorial on Louisville's riverfront, virtually every ceremonial guardsman will tell you there's something truly special — and very important about

the memorial services they conduct.

The ceremonial image of Honor Guard members reflects dignity, honor and a strong representation of the values on which the military was founded, said Chief Master Sgt. Sheila Atwell, commander of the 123rd Honor Guard.

"Our team maintains the highest standard of discipline and appearance," she said. "I feel we present a positive attitude and a lasting image of the military members that have come and gone. We are all very proud to be a member of this team, and work hard to show that to all who witness what we do.

"It's an image that's well honored from the beginning of the establishment of the Honor Guard. Most of the unit's men and women — 90 percent — are traditional guardsmen who volunteer their free time to pay a final respect to the soldiers who have sealed our freedoms."

The requirements to become a ceremonial guardsman go much further than image alone, said Senior Master Sgt. Ronnie Holliman, superintendent of the wing's 123rd Services Flight.

Being an Honor Guard member means having pride, respect, honor, dignity and loyalty in addition to a sharp, well-groomed image, she said.

Many choose the Honor Guard from the beginning of their careers, some even before. They say the time-honored tradition is something in which to take ultimate pride.

"I feel that being in the honor guard is a great privilege — and the first word I think of is pride," said Staff Sgt. Cutty Parker of the 123rd Honor Guard. "It takes a special person to be a part of the team, someone who has pride and excellence, someone who exemplifies the three core values of the Air Force."

Besides preserving the tradition of military funerals, the Honor Guard also supports a variety of Color Guard events on base and in the local community.

The purpose of the Color Guard is to represent the United States, the Commonwealth, the Air Force and the Kentucky Air National Guard by presenting the colors of the United States, Kentucky and the U.S. Air Force.

KyANG Honor Guard members attend numerous events, including memorial dedications, parades, graduation and commencement ceremonies, and other events as requested by the community.

The 123rd Honor Guard currently has 20 members and is seeking more individuals to participate in the program, Sergeant Parker said.

In order to qualify, applicants must be interviewed, attend a one-week training class and receive an evaluation. After participants complete the process, they are eligible to perform in ceremonies.

The guardsmen practice quarterly through the year. Each practice lasts approximately four hours and is held in the Base Annex. During the summer months, the Color Guard participates in approximately 30 events; in the off-season, the team is involved in about 15 Color Guard functions.

For more information, contact Sergeant Parker at ext. 4620 option 5, or via e-mail at cutty.parker@kyloui.ang.af.mil.



Tech. Sgt. Dennis Flora/KyANG

Members of the KyANG Color Guard perform at an awards ceremony earlier this year. The team currently has 20 members but is seeking new participants. The 123rd Honor Guard and Color Guard participates in events ranging from funeral proceedings and memorial dedications to parades and commencement ceremonies.

19 Kentucky airmen receive medals in May

Rosa presented with Bronze Star for service in OEF

By Tech. Sgt. Amy Mundell
Cargo Courier Editor

Hundreds of members of the 123rd Airlift Wing packed into the Fuel Cell Hangar on May 15 to see 19 fellow Guardsmen receive medals for their service to their country, state and community.

Among the recipients was Senior Master Sgt. Jon Rosa, a combat controller from the 123rd Special Tactics Squadron, who was awarded the Bronze Star Medal by Maj. Gen. Donald Storm, adjutant general of the Kentucky National Guard.

Sergeant Rosa was honored for his service in Afghanistan during Operation Enduring Freedom, where he was directly responsible for the safety and security of Afghan President Hamid Karzai.

His duties included orchestrating 26 close-air support sorties for overhead security of the president's motorcade and air travel.

Sergeant Rosa's aviation expertise and leadership set the standard for all special tactics troops in country, according to his award citation.

Being selected for the security detail was quite an honor, said Col. Mark Kraus, commander of the 123rd Airlift Wing.

"It's a testament to his technical expertise and professionalism," Colonel Kraus said.

"While certainly a reflection on Jon and his ability, on a wider scope it also reflects on all the accomplishments of the special tactics squadron and their unique role in the war on terror.

"If you ask any of those folks, including Sergeant Rosa, they'd just say they were doing their job, but it's more than that."

Colonel Kraus also expressed his appreciation for the exceptional performance of 18 other members of Kentucky Air Guard who were presented with medals during the ceremony.

Most of the 18 airmen were honored for their service in either Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom or both.



Senior Airman Phillip Speck/KyANG

Maj. Gen. Donald Storm, adjutant general of the Kentucky National Guard, pins the Bronze Star Medal on Senior Master Sgt. Jon Rosa here May 15 for his service in Afghanistan during Operation Enduring Freedom. Sergeant Rosa served as a body guard to the country's president, Hamid Karzai, for three months in 2003.

Other Medal Recipients

Meritorious Service Medal

—Lt. Col. Neil Mullaney
123rd Aircraft Maintenance Sq.

Air Medal

—Staff Sgt. Joshua Haney
123rd Special Tactics Sq.

Air Force Commendation Medal

—Senior Master Sgt. Howard Rutledge
123rd Logistics Readiness Sq.
(First oak leaf cluster)
—Master Sgt. John Bowling
123rd Maintenance Sq.
—Master Sgt. Troy Ciukaj
123rd Maintenance Sq.
—Master Sgt. Gary Dunlap
123rd Maintenance Sq.
—Master Sgt. Don Fox
123rd Aircraft Maintenance Sq.
—Master Sgt. Tim Holaday
123rd Maintenance Sq.

—Master Sgt. Donald Overstreet
123rd Aircraft Maintenance Sq.
—Master Sgt. Anthony Pickman
123rd Logistics Readiness Sq.
—Master Sgt. Pete Rendon
123rd Aircraft Maintenance Sq.
—Tech. Sgt. Morgan Bramer
123rd Aircraft Maintenance Sq.
(First oak leaf cluster)
—Tech. Sgt. Curtis Hall
123rd Maintenance Sq.
—Tech. Sgt. Steve Hatfield
123rd Maintenance Sq.
(First oak leaf cluster)
—Tech. Sgt. Ron Thomas
123rd Maintenance Sq.
—Staff Sgt. Larry Burba
123rd Aircraft Maintenance Sq.
—Staff Sergeant Tracy Willen
123rd Logistics Readiness Sq.
—Senior Airman Jeremie Wheatley
123rd Maintenance Sq.